

This week brought action on many issues affecting our region. Legislation regarding telework for federal employees, and the National Flood Insurance Program was passed, and I also introduced legislation to boost economic development in the region.

On Wednesday, the House passed legislation to enhance and promote opportunities for telework. Telework is a key part of the solution to getting cars off the road in order to alleviate traffic congestion in our region. I, like many others, commute daily from my home in the Northern Neck to Washington when Congress is in session, and I understand the traffic frustrations first hand. Telework is also crucial to ensuring continuity of operations in the case of a national emergency or weather event like the 2010 winter storms. After this winter's week-long snow storm, the Office of Personnel Management downgraded its initial estimate that the government lost \$100 million worth of productivity each day it remained closed to a projected lost of \$71 million for each day during the closure. This demonstrated that 30% of federal employees worked from home during this time and the potential for greater use of telework.

This bill will help ensure that Federal employees who are eligible to telework are able to do so and have access to facilities that can accommodate them. H.R. 1722, the Telework Improvements Act of 2010, would permit Federal employees to telework at least 20 percent of the hours worked in every two administrative workweeks.

Earlier this year, I introduced H.R. 4348, the Telework Tax Incentive Act, which would provide eligible taxpayers with an annual tax credit for qualified teleworking expenses paid or incurred by the taxpayer that year, up to \$1,000. Employees working in a teleworking arrangement where the employee works at least 75 days per year would be eligible to receive the tax credit. This would also give a great boost to employees looking to telework.

The House also passed a reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) for five years through 2015. This is great news for both individuals and businesses; especially those who have been negatively affected by the uncertainty in the program this year. This legislation can provide certainty for those home and business owners who have experienced flooding and hurricanes. Many in the First District have experienced these events firsthand and know the importance of being prepared.

Also this week, I introduced legislation to enhance Federal leasing activities in the First District, to bring jobs and economic development in our area. The bill would direct the Administrator of General Services to extend to private property owners and managers in the City of Fredericksburg and the counties of Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania, and Stafford in Virginia the same preferences in negotiating the lease of space for the use by the Federal government that are given to private property owners and managers in jurisdictions in the designated National Capital Region area of Northern Virginia. Adding Federal leasing opportunities in the First Congressional District has the potential to generate economic development in our region and would provide the Federal government with additional options for housing their operations in our region.

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Armed Services Committee where he is the Ranking Member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.